“LEGO® Football 2000”

A brief game design document by Data Design

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Target Audience & Age Range Considerations

Although the following ideas and concepts have been produced with young children aged between 5 and 12 in mind, as per the LEGO System range, the audience for a game of this genre is to be extended to incorporate older users.

For the remainder of the document, we will refer to the human in control of the game as the **USER** and mini-figures as **PLAYERS.**

Target Platforms

The game is currently being designed for the PC and PSX platform and an option for the Gameboy may be considered – although in a cut down version.

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Product Overview

- Football has a global appeal
- It is launched around the same time as the Play Materials football range
  - Lots of cross promotional advantages
- Football is possible the most popular genre of computer games.

Footballs popularity as a computer game genre, initially gives it a lot of potential competition, there are two sub genre of Football.

The realistic simulation
Motion captured characters
The team Management simulation
Buying players,
paying wages

However we are approaching football at a totally different angle.

We have an excellent Play Materials product, that is a totally new way of playing football.

It is not a simulation but is still clearly football, and will appeal to football fans.

This is how we aim to design the Computer version.

1. Closely modeled on the Play materials product, but with a number of enhancements that we can re-produce on a computer.
2. Incorporating the vast scope of the Lego ranges and using known themes
3. Using the Lego 'building' philosophy to allow the user to construct his own unique variant of football.

Summary
We are not competing against the existing football products,
we aren't writing a football simulation,
based on the strengths and appeal of LEGO we can build a unique new product.

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Product Objectives

1. To make a **unique** product that fills a clear gap in the market. Currently football games fall into two clear categories, neither of which is suitable for a younger user. They are;

    - Complex football management games such as Championship Manager, Ultimate Soccer Manager and Premier Manager,
    - Arcade games reliant on dexterity and high degrees of skill, such as EA's FIFA range, World League Soccer and ISS Pro.

    These two categories are filled by games that leave a younger football fan without a computer game that they can enjoy.
    They are getting increasingly complex.

2. We intend to make a product that is appealing and **entertaining** to the younger end of the LEGO System target audience (5+) whilst making the nature of game elements scaleable, so older users can be entertained and enjoy a challenge at the same time. This will be further enhanced by using lots of fun, animated sequences to portray the action.
    Our game will be fun to play and watch.

3. To make a game that can be played successfully by multiple players over the Internet. The turn-based nature of the game lends itself perfectly, reducing the latency problems that currently hamper more arcade style games when played online.

4. To make a computer product that is complimentary alongside the LEGO play materials Football game, while keeping the computer product equally as entertaining in its own right.

5. The nature of the age group targeted lends us to add a different slant to the product, allowing us to add more elements usually found in an activity set. Examples of which are out-of-the-box play ideas, such as the swapping of player cards to incorporate into your computer game team and the ability to print out key moments in the game and player reward screens.

6. Another key objective is to make the game visually bright and attractive without a wash of complicated statistics cluttering up the game screen, which we feel would not appeal to the younger market.

7. To provide the user with video and audio feedback so realistic, it feels like the player is sitting on the terraces beside the pitch.

Game Overview

Overview: The Game of Football

Naturally with a football game, the idea is for the player to play his team against another player or the computer with the intention of scoring more goals, thus winning the game.

A simple basic gameplay that is easy to convey to children and is easily understood by children

The game will contain lots of high quality 3D animated sequences for the players, their actions, and re-actions. These will be dynamic, entertaining and amusing. By using 3D models we can have an endless variety of camera views to add interest and variety to the game.

Overview: Age Range Scaleablity

The game has to be playable by players at the youngest end of the LEGO System bracket, namely those aged 5, while still remaining playable by players aged 12 onwards. To address this in game, we will have an option on the first game menu that lets the player select the complexity level.

Select Difficulty Level

Easy **Advanced**

Where the 'Easy' level refers to the 5+ age group and the 'Advanced' level refers to older players who want slightly more of a challenge. An example of the difference between the two levels can be found when one of the player's team has possession of the football and clicks the '**Kick**' button to pass to another player.

When playing the 'Easiest' level, the player will be able to click on another team player to pass to, highlighted with a clear flashing arrow. Then all he has to do is click on the large '**KICK**', icon and the computer will try to make the pass, it will add a slight random element, dependant on the range of the shot, to give a chance of missing.

A mid range Skill level has a higher degree of dexterity required in aiming to another player, having to attempt to get the right angle, height and power behind the shot to reach the position you are aiming for. How this is done is explained in-detail in the 'interface' section.

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Playing the 'Advanced' level requires an higher element of skill. The reaction times are faster, and extra effecst like after-touch on the ball are allowed.

The skills levels can be chosen independently for each player. So a elder brother or mother can play with a young child, and still have an entertaining and challenging game. This feature alone is quite unique and a prime feature.

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Overview: The Game Interface

The game's interface is designed to make it colourful so players at the younger end of the LEGO System age group will find it appealing.

It is also designed in such a way as to leave the screen uncluttered, with menus folding away wherever necessary. The Action menu option on the right slides on and off as needed. The 'current player' window normally just shows the player graphic. If the user then clicks on this, the player animates and his statistics come up in a pop-up window right beside him.

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We have made sure that the interface is an **AID** to the gameplay rather than be obtrusive and obstruct the flow of the game as it does in other football games. All the essential information such as the current game time, who's playing and the score are all instantly accessible.

Overview: Control Method

The play material football product has an excellent user interface for the players.

- It is tactile
- and intuitive

It easily incorporates direction and velocity in a single simple control.

It is the most striking and fundamental feature of the Play-Material product.

We intend to emulate this feature on the computer version.

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When one of our 'footballers' has possession of the ball, he becomes disengaged from the spring

It will disappear, with a special effect.

The footballer will then be
- a fluid, well animated character.
- shown using ball control,
- and with individual abilities.

This will give us the most dynamic animated character, and the 'spring control' appears in the bottom right of the screen.

The controller will move in-response to the mouse, analogue joystick or controller. This will give us a full 360 degree rotation.

By moving forwards and backwards, or up and down with the mouse we can select an angle for the shot.

The footballer and the screen will rotate in 3D to which ever direction the player selects.

Kick

On selecting 'kick' we will display a power bar, which will rise, and the player must release the 'kick' as close to the target marker as possible. Deviating to either side of the marker will cause the ball to fall short or overshoot.

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This control method has been used successfully on virtually every Golf game, but never in a football product.

It is an easy concept to understand it is performed with a single click and release, but allows skill development and a slight element of chance.

Difficulty
Difficulty levels can easily be implemented with a slower rising bar, allowing the younger user, more time to respond.

After touch
An advanced 'after touch' can also be implemented, with additional controller movements, allowing trick shots.

Player Interaction
When the player is choosing whom to pass the ball to, the players in the projected line of sight, will all respond., in a lively manner.
- They will raise their arms, calling for the ball
- Opposing players will shuffle about, trying to block a shot.
- Your own team will move within their boundaries trying to get in a better position.

Trick shots
The ball will behave in a realistic physical manner.
It will roll down slopes and re-bound off angled walls.
Skill and judgement will allow players to use re-bounds from side barriers to by-pass the opposing players.

General Interface Design.
All in-game functions are accessible by moving the mouse and clicking the left button. There will be no forced use of the keyboard, with the exception of typing the player name(s) at the start of the game.

Overview: Competition and Play Modes
The game will initially contain default teams, in synergy with the ranges available from the Play materials range, we believe these will be versions of international teams.

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The user can play in a wide variety of competitions and ways chosen at the start of the game from the main menu. This menu will contain the following options,

- **Tutorial.** This will be a one-player game with the referee acting as an advisor, instructing what the user should click and when.
- **Single Game.** One or more players pick teams, decide the game duration and style of play.
- **League**. This will lead to options to start a new league, load a saved league etc.
- **Cup**. Similarly, options to start a new Cup competition and load a saved game will follow.
- **Network Game**. Options will then take you through connection, joining a league, playing against someone else in a single match etc.
- **Internet Game**. Very similar to Network Game options.

Overview: Network play and The Internet

Social gaming is becoming more and more popular today, with the Internet becoming a natural medium game players use. Because of a number of reasons highlighted below, LEGO System Football is an ideal game to play over networks. Reasons such as,

- The turn-based nature of the game means there are **no latency** problems,
- Works on all speed modems, even 14.4k,
- Teams play in the users own design team strips, individualising the game to the point that strip designs start to get associated with the person behind the team,
- Three varieties of game play options; single match, league, cup

INTERNET CAPABILITIES

There are inherent problems with internet games, they all suffer from delays due to 'latency'

Latency is the delay it takes to send information through the web to it arriving on another players machine.

So you might kick a ball to what appears to be an empty goal on your screen.
However due to 'latency' another players footballer may have already moved into the intended path of your ball, but the packets of information telling your machine where to print this footballer have not yet arrived on your machine.So when they do arrive, the opposing footballer suddenly appears to have jumped, right into the middle of your clear shot at the goal. It looks bad and plays worse.

The amount of data for all the footballers movements and the need to check all the possible collisions with the ball, also slows the game down.

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There is no programming cure for latency, it can not be improved until the lines of communication get faster.

Our design works perfectly within the constraints of the current Internet. Presenting a smooth regular flowing game.

In Lego Football 2000
The football players are restrained in fixed positions, so we don't have any close up fast action 'tackles' and movements, which usually end up appearing as jerky, stunted jumps to the other players.

When the player 'kicks' the ball, the physics information is all that needs to be passed to the other machines. These few bytes, when received by the other machines, can then be used to accurately generate the exact movement of the ball, on all the machines, and no more data needs to be sent until the ball comes to rest. This gives us perfectly smooth animation of the characters and ball movement.

The 'latency' is effectively hidden in the 'kick' time for each footballer.

The small packet size also makes it easily accessible to users with slow speed modems.

MULTI-USER LEAGUES

The potential for practical, usable Internet gaming, will allow us to enhance the product.

Leagues can be established – Via the WWW.LEGO.COM where players can register their team in a league.

The league teams will then be able to play at pre-defined times against the other league teams, for the championship.

The top teams from the various leagues can be promoted to a 'super' league, which will encourage more interest among the regular, dedicate players.

Individual Characters

Individual Characters can be 'put on the market' and traded for other players that they may want. As all the footballers are registered with the LEGO web site, they can all have a unique ID which follows them as they are bought sold or traded. This makes them into 'real' characters and users 'buying' a player will get their history, of Goals scored, matches played etc.

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INDIVIDUAL FOOTBALL TEAMS

Each Footballer is unique. And the player will be provided with an editor, which they can use to 'select and customize their players, before registering their team with WWW.LEGO.COM

They can alter the
- hair style,
- hair colour
- face graphic
- Shorts
- Football strip

Of each of their players.
The face graphic can be a scanned photo, so it will really look like whom ever you wish.
We imagine players making teams up of their favorite bands
- 'steps united'
- 'bewitched FC'

Or
- their friends,
- or family,
- or cartoon faces they have designed.
- or even real football players.

The teams strip can also be designed and registered. The league players will get the added attraction of when they play an opposing team, the relatively small amount of data to show these graphics, are downloaded form the web site at the start of the game. So your unique specially designed team will be seen by other people all over the world, and you get the variety of seeing all the other unique individual teams.
We are not aware of any other company that offers this degree of individual design and presentation.

The appeal of promoting your own team with everyone being able to see your face will appeal to a wide audience, to get their five minutes of fame.

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Overview: The Pitch

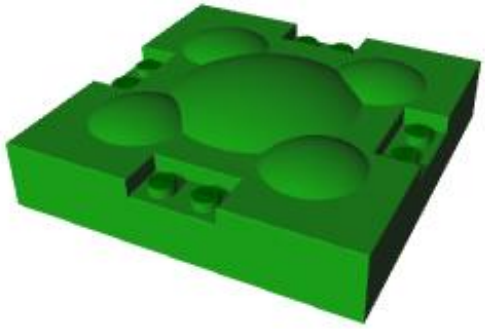
Design the pitch.

The football pitch can be created in different dimensions by using the two different sized floor pieces (tiles) This allow you to have small pitches, large full sized pitches, over sized pitches or even custom four goal pitches.

We want to add an extra element to the computer game of 'mounds', which rather than the current 'dips' where the ball rolls down to the player in the centre, the tile is convex and the ball will roll to the side, into an adjacent tile block.

Each Pitch tile contains a single character or object.

There will be a custom pitch option where each player will take a turn at placing a tile, to construct the pitch. This will allow the player to generate formations, strong in defence midfield, attack, or designed for special trick shots they have been practising.



A 'Hump' tile

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A 'standard' pitch

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A 'Small' pitch

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A Novelty 'four' user pitch

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Pitch Objects

These are for non standard football 'novelty' games.

Swing panels

These are flat boards, which can swivel around the centre.
If the board is face on to a shot then it will be an obstacle, but if it is side on to the shot then the ball will sail straight through it.
A ball striking a panel flat on will rotate the board and deflect the ball at right angles.

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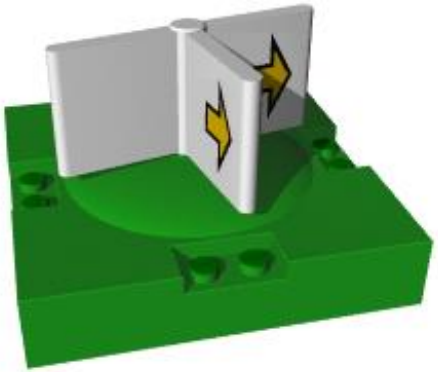
A variation on the swinging panel



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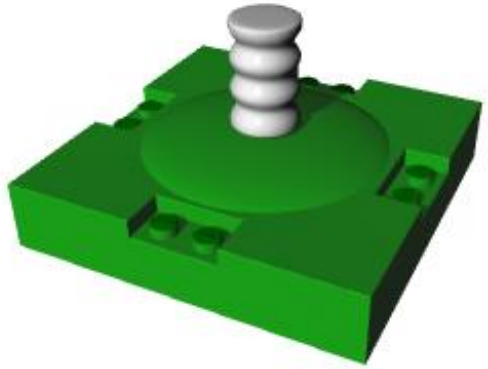
RE-BOUND posts

Striking a re-bound post will cause the ball to rebound back the way it came.



Novelty Players

Team player styles
Town – firemen, police, mechanics

Apart from the normal football player mini-figures, the player can choose from a selection of 'novelty' mini-figs. Some of these will have special abilities and special animations.
E.G.

Dragon

- A strong powerful player
- He has a temper, which can result in a his 'flaming' a neighbouring player, who keeps possession of the ball for too long.

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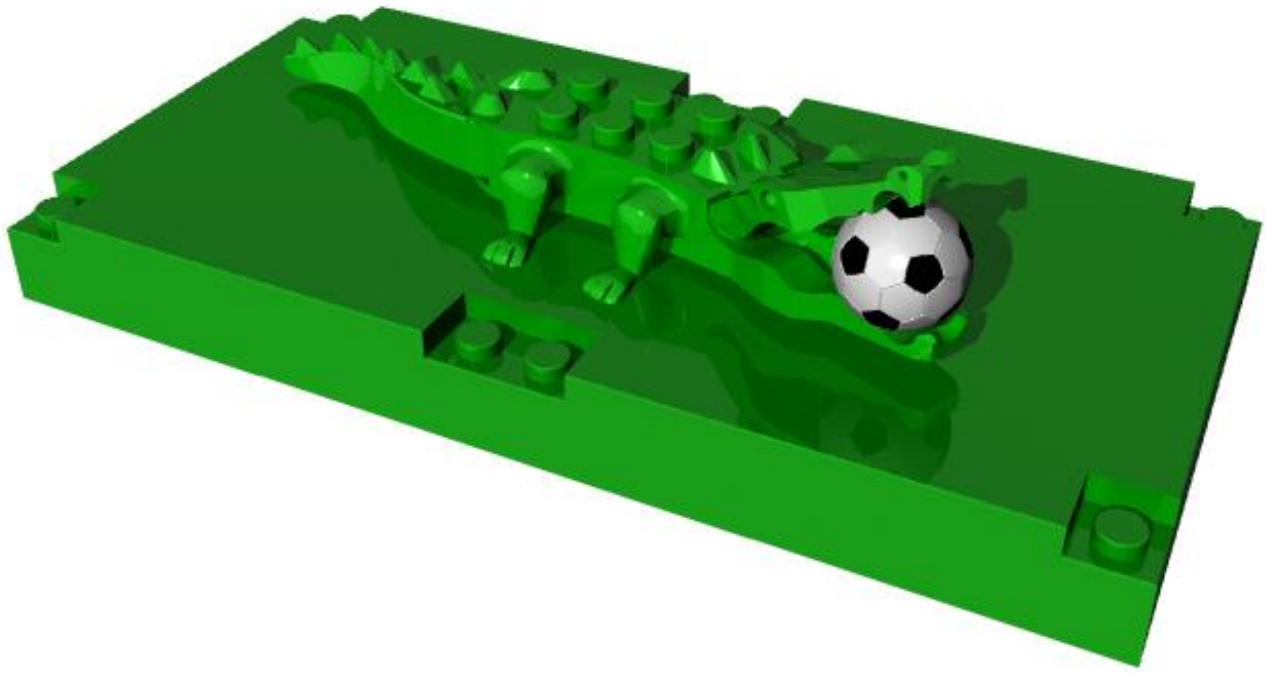
Crocodile

- Can't intercept the high shots, but due to his width he has a wider catch range.
- A direct hit to the head will result in the crocodile trying to catch the ball, with his teeth, which will burst it, and cause a penalty
- It has a very powerful strike, with its tail



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Wizard

- He can cast magical spells, to attract the ball to his position.
- A weak strength player

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Space Man

- She can 'float' anti-gravity style into the air to make a high catch

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Overview: Rules

Most normal football rules can be translated into a younger computer version of the game successfully. The Linesmen will wander up and down the side of the pitch which will add interesting animation, and they will be used to signal any errors and rules that the player might break (the wizard casting spells might be an infringment!!)

Overview: The Referee

The referee will play a big part in LEGO System Football. As well as the in-game referee, he is also the advisor in the tutorial mode, giving verbal instructions and visual indications specifically what the user should click and when. He will also give praise and allow the user to 'have-another-go' at something if he/she didn't quite complete a task correctly.

When an event happens that calls for a refereeing decision such as a foul, a pre-rendered animation of the referee will pop up in a window and blow his whistle. Underneath the window, the list of his possible decisions will spin round in carousel fashion. Possible decisions being to caution a player, award a 'free' kick, play-on etc. This carousel will then slow down and land on a decision. We feel that the suspense of seeing more favourable decisions spinning by will be very entertaining.

Overview: Customisation

For advanced players who want to customise their team, we will have a player/team editor where the user can create his own players, or pick from a pool of pre-defined ones.

Overview: Other Activities

In LEGO Football, we will have a number of other features for the very young players to access that do not refer directly to the game. Any area of the screen that the user clicks on will produce something of interest. These little touches are entertaining and should extend the longevity of the game because there should always be something new to see or hear.

After a match, a screen will display the back pages of a LEGO newspaper. A photo taken from the game, the player's name and a headline that reflects what happened in the match will be displayed and will also incorporate the user's photo if they have provided one. The user will also be able to print this page as a record of their achievements that they can show to friends.

Other printable screens are the League/Cu positions screen and the team editor screen (Only available to more advanced players).

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How The Game Works

Kick Off!

The game starts with the toss of a coin with the user then clicking on heads or tails. The successful, side starts with control of the ball.

The player will use his controlled to view around the screen and when he is ready he will 'KICK' the ball.

The computer physiscs will calculate where the ball will land, it will always, due to the design of the board, end up in another players control, or in the goal, or possibly out of the pitch, and time for a corner or throw in.

The game is turn based in as much as the player now in control will be having the next go. If you passed successfully then this should be the same player. This continues until the end of the game where the team who has scored the most goals wins. If the game is a draw, the user selects whether to exit, to play extra time, penalties or a golden-goal situation (where next goal wins). In this 'Golden goal' situation, these choices will repeat if a draw is the result of the extra time.

A GAME OF SKILL

The interface requires a high degree of skill to mater, and experienced players will attempt trick shotsm bouncing off walls, getting the speed of the ball just right to allow the ball to curve round the edge of 'hump' blocks, and endless variety of tricks using the novelty teams and models.

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Action Menu: When in Possession

Depending on each players unique individual skills they will be able to perform special animations. These will be entertaining and will only become known to the player through playing and experimenting with the game. Similar to games like mortal combat, users will try different combinations of moves and choices and will find new aspects to their players.
For Example.
If you have chosen a short pass and you do full power then this particular player (and only this one with this combination of actions) will itap the ball twice, flip it up into the air and 'head' it over to the adjacent player. Instead of the normal pass.

Learning these moves add longevity to the game. It also gives the player more choice on deciding where to place players at the start of the game. With certain players, he will find have a particuarly powerful long distance goal scoring ability.

Or which player is best at taking corners. This makes the game into characters, which encourages the real life, selling and trading of players via the internet, or saved disks.

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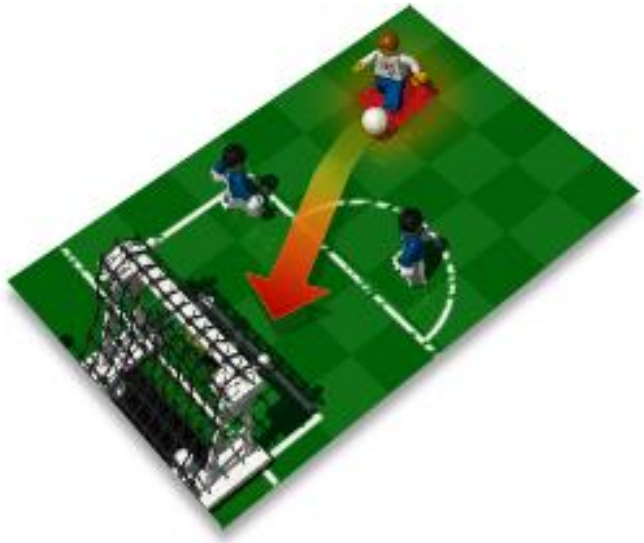
Shooting on Goal

Selecting this option tries a shot on the opponent's goal. The option does not become available until a member of the user's team has possession of the football around the edge of the opponent's penalty area. Triggering a shot on goal is done by moving the mouse pointer over the action menu on the right of the screen and clicking on the '**SHOOT**' option.

In 'Easy' mode, the user will then only have to click on the opponent's goal to perform the action. The shot will be aimed towards where the player clicks. I.e. should the user click on the left-hand side of the goal, then the shot will be aimed towards the left of the goal. The computer will decide the outcome of the shot and play an animated sequence to depict this.



In 'Advanced' mode, the user will be prompted to set the power of the shot using a 'Power-Meter' in the same way he/she would do when passing.

If the shot successfully reaches the goalmouth, then depending on what options are set in the game, the goally will automatically respond and try and save depending on his skill level or there will be new view for the defending player who can try and move the goally left and right to save the ball in a small fast arcade sequence.

Some possible outcomes.

- the shot will be off-target and the goalkeeper will not even have to make a save.
- The goalkeeper saves the shot but the ball will escape back onto the field, where an attacker can get in quickly and have another shot.
- The shot will be tipped over the bar or pushed round the post resulting in a corner kick to the player.
- Iit is a perfect save and the goalkeeper catches the ball.

Of course, these will be transparent to the player who will perform his shot, roll his on-screen dice, and then watch an animated sequence to see the result.

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Move-Players (Advanced Mode Only)

When playing the game in advanced mode the user will have the option to move his players up and down the field, swapping positions for each turn he has possession of the ball.

The '**Move-Players'** option is only available when playing the game in 'Advanced' mode. Using this allows the user to move his team around, rather than kicking the ball or running with it. This allows the player to build up attacks and put pressure on an opponent's goal but also allows him/her to become short numbered in defence. This should make for some varied match styles. E.g. Mid-field battle, On-the-Break, All-out-Attack etc.

Moving players can only be done on the user's turn and is very simple. One the user has clicked the '**Move-Players**' menu option, he/she is asked to roll an on-screen dice. As per the LEGO System model game, the user can then move his players the amount of squares the dice shows up.

Moving the players then is merely a case of clicking a player followed by a click on the pitch to show where you want that player to move to. The maximum distance the first player can move is the number rolled on the dice. If the user elects to move him less than that maximum, the remaining moves are held while the user moves another team member. This moving of players continues until the number of moves brought about by the dice roll has been used up, whereby the game switches to the other team/computer's turn.

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Mini-figure crowd enjoying the action

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‘Dead Ball’ Situations

A ‘dead-ball’ situation occurs when an infringement of the rules occurs, or when the ball has left the field of play.

Although there is no direct way for the user to infringe the rules directly, they can occur as a result of a computer generated random event. Such events can be the result of tackles or handling the football. The referee calls this foul and makes one of a possible number of decisions. Decisions such as;

- To award the recipient of the foul a ‘free’ kick,
- To award the recipient of the foul a ‘penalty’ kick, if the infringement occurred inside the penalty area,
- To give the player a telling-off, followed by the award of a ‘free’ kick,
- To produce a yellow card, warning a player not to infringe the rules again, again followed by the award of a ‘free kick’,
- To produce a red card to a player who has infringed the rules too often. The player then has to leave the field and take no further part in the game. A ‘free’ kick situation then occurs

‘Free’ Kick

‘Free’ kicks occur when a member of the opposite team fouls a player in possession of the ball outside of the penalty area. The game stops and the referee orders a ‘free’ kick. The kicker then gets chance to pass the ball from the place the infringement occurred, or attempts a shot on goal. Either way, the defending team then get chance to build a ‘wall’ of players who have to stand at least 10 yards away. (For the game we will make this 3 squares). This ‘wall’ is built automatically and is generally built when the ‘free’ kick is in shooting range of the goal.

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Taking a 'free' kick- bending the ball around the wall!

Taking an attacking 'free' kick.

Any time one of the user's player's is fouled outside the penalty box, a free kick will occur. If it is outside of shooting range, the player will be presented with a normal situation, but with the action menu only showing '**Pass**' as the selectable option. It acts exactly as it does in normal free play and the passing differences found between playing 'Easy' and 'Advanced' also apply.

If a member of the user's team is fouled outside the penalty box, but within shooting range, the user is presented with two options on the action menu; '**Pass**' and '**Shoot**'.

In 'Easy' mode the '**Shoot**' option just makes the player take his kick. The computer decides the outcome and plays an animated sequence to show this.

In 'Advanced' mode, clicking the '**Shoot**' menu option prompts the player to roll an on-screen dice against the computer/opponent. The results of which are;

- Rolling a 1 means the kick fails completely. The kicker falls over, mis-kicks the ball or sends the ball wide or high of goal.
- If the kickers score is more than the goalkeeper's dice, the kick has a chance of going in. The higher the roll, the more likely it is to go in. The ball can hit the wall, the frame of the goal, the goalkeeper or can go in. Possibilities could be a really powerful blast that goes right through the wall or a banana-like curler that goes round the wall and in. We will have many of these that vary between the spectacular and the very humourous.

Defending a 'free' kick.

When defending a free kick when outside the penalty box there are two possible scenarios. Firstly, when the kick occurs outside the range of a direct shot on goal. When this happens, the game plays as it does normally. I.e. the computer/opponent is in possession of the football, passes it away and the user has to try and get control of it. The second scenario occurs when the infringement occurs and the computer/opposition decides to take a shot on goal.

In 'Easy' mode, the computer decides the outcome of the shot and plays an animated sequence depicting the action.

When the game is being played in 'Advanced' mode and the opposition elects to shoot, the user is invited to click on three players to make his/her defensive wall out of. Once one of those players has been selected, he/she will run over from their position on the field and stand in the wall, whereby the user then picks the next until all three are in the wall. Once the wall is built, the player is invited to roll an on-screen dice against the computer/opposition.

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Penalty Kick

A penalty kick situation happens if an infringement of the rules such as a handball or a foul occurs inside the penalty area. The nearest attacking player to the incident then steps up to take the kick.

Mini-figure taking a Penalty

When the game is being played in 'Easy' mode, the user is prompted to press the shoot button on the options menu and the computer makes a decision as to whether the goalkeeper saves the kick or not.

A full-screen animated sequence displays the result of the kick.

In 'Advanced' mode, the user is prompted to roll an on-screen dice against the goalkeeper.

- If the kicker rolls a 1 on the die, the shot will be off-target and the goalkeeper will not even have to make a save.
- If the kickers score is higher than the goalkeepers, then his shot is on target and goes in.
- If the goalkeepers score is 1 or 2 over the kicker's score, he will save the shot but the ball will escape back onto the field, where an attacker can get in quickly and have another shot.
- If the goalkeepers score is 3 or 4 over the kicker's score, the shot will be tipped over the bar or pushed round the post resulting in a corner kick to the player.

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- If the goalkeepers dice roll is a 6 then it is a perfect save and the goalkeeper catches the ball.
- If both the goalkeeper and the kicker roll a 6 then they are prompted to roll again until a difference occurs.

As before, this is all transparent to the user and he/she just sees the outcome of the dice battle as an animated mini-figure sequence.

Corner Kick

Corner kicks occur when the ball goes of play behind the goal after touching a member of the defending team. The ball is placed on the corner of the playing field and kicked into play by one of the attacking team's players. To the game they operate in a very similar way to crosses do.

When playing the game in 'Easy' mode, the user is prompted to press the cross button on the options menu, where the computer will decide how the action unfolds. An animated sequence will show this. The results of this kick could be;

- Poor kick. The Ball goes out of play or hits a defender.
- Accurate kick. Ball lands at the feet of an attacker. The player is then prompted to press the '**Shoot**' button as in normal play.
- The goalkeeper comes out to catch the ball in flight.
- Ball is passed out to a mini-figure on the edge of the penalty area

When playing in 'Advanced' mode, the user is prompted to select a mini-figure to aim the corner kick at. The rest of the functionality follows exactly as a 'cross' does. A 'Power-Meter' will then appear with the accuracy marker set. The nearer the user stops the power bar to the accuracy mark, the more likely the player is to receive the ball. If the user stops the power bar exactly on the accuracy mark, a perfect kick occurs and the attacker gets an automatic shot/header on goal.

Throw-In

When the ball leaves the field from either side of the pitch, the team who was without the ball just prior to it leaving the field get to throw the ball back into play.

For players playing the game in 'Easy' mode, clicking on the highlighted '**Throw**' menu throws the ball to the nearest player on the user's team, to a maximum distance of of 6 squares. If the target player is outside this 6 square limit, the ball is thrown in their direction, but does not reach them and remains on the square it lands in.

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Players who are playing the game in 'Advanced' mode are required to select a player to attempt to throw the ball to. A 'Power-Meter' then appears underneath the '**Throw**' menu item. This acts in exactly the same way as a pass does, with the user required to stop the power bar on or close to the accuracy mark.

Mini-figure taking a 'throw-in'

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Other Activities

In LEGO System Football, the very youngest players will be as entertained by what is going on on-screen as they are with the football action. To address this, we propose to introduce a range of activities to the product that the younger player will enjoy.

In-game entertainment

Any part of the screen the user clicks on will animate and play sound. Such things as,

1. Clicking on an area of the crowd will cause that section to animate. They will wave flags and banners, jump, clap and sing. We intend to have many crowd samples, so the user should never hear two the same within a large number of mouse clicks.
2. Clicking on a player on the field causes him to turn round, wave and say "hello" to the user. Repeated clicking on him can cause a number of responses, such a giggling as though tickled. Again, we intend to have a number of varied and humorous animations present, so the user will remain amused by them for considerable time.
3. Should the user click on one of the national flags of the teams playing, it waves about in the wind, playing a quick snippet of that nation's national anthem.
4. All the essential 'action' zones such as menus and so on will animate and make sounds.
5. Clicking on the scorecard carrying mini-figures will cause them to animate and say "hello". Their voice will also reflect the mood they are in. I.e. when their team is winning, they will be happy and when their team is losing, their voice will be a little sad. These figures will also animate when a goal is scored, a foul is committed and other key points in the game.

After the Game

When the game is over, the user is presented with the back page of a LEGO newspaper. It will show a snapshot from the game and a related headline containing the users name and team.

- If the game ended in a win for either side, then the screen shot will be one of a mini-figure celebrating or a snap-shot of the winning goal going in. The headline would read something like, "*JOHNS MIGHTY REDS HIT FOR SIX*", "*PETERS ITALY TRIUMPH*" or "*HELENS WALES LOSE AGAIN 4-0*", with an appropriate picture.
- If the game ended goal-less then the headline will involve another key incident such as a sending off.
- Failing that, a humourous picture of some of the crowd falling asleep would be used, with a headline reflecting the 0-0 score line.

On this headline screen, the user will be allowed to various things. There will be buttons along the bottom of the screen for,

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- Saving his/her newspaper picture as a .bmp file to disk.
- Saving his/her newspaper picture as a Windows backdrop image.
- Printing the picture.

This will allow players to take their printouts to their friends and show what they have achieved.

Other printing options will be available on the player/team editor screen (available only to players playing the game in 'Advanced' mode) and on the League/Cup position screen.

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Customising the Team (Advanced Mode Only)

Players who elect to play the game in 'Advanced' mode will be allowed to customise their team. A screen will be available where the user can,

- Edit the manager's name (that's the user!) and pick a picture for his face from the collection of LEGO mini-figure faces. The user can also import a .bmp file to use as the manager's face. This will allow the user to put a scanned picture of him/herself in.
- Edit shirt, shorts and sock colours and design from a preset selection. This selection will be made up of the component strip parts from the teams present in the game.
- Choose from a large selection of LEGO mini-figure faces and hairstyles.
- Choose to make custom player faces made up out of the component parts of their faces. The user can cycle through the different eye, mouth, hair and beard styles and create their own custom player
- Edit player names and attributes.
- Save his/her team for future use. These teams can then be swapped on disk with friends, or uploaded to the Internet. An option will be available here where the user's team photo can be printed out or saved as their Windows backdrop.

Future Expansion

With a game of this nature, there is a great deal of expansion possibilities. One of which is to produce a management add-on. In such a product, the game style is changed to one based upon the trade of players, management of funds and expansion of facilities. To maintain the appeal to the younger audience, this would be presented in a fun and humourous style not dissimilar to that of Bullfrog's Theme Park.

To break down the multi-national financial differences between countries, we would use some common currency such as 'trading points'.

The match-day part of the game would be played in the same way as the generic product, but in between matches the user will be able to put his/her players onto the transfer market and trade them with other players worldwide. When viewing players to purchase in the transfer market, the user would be able to view the player's statistics, club history and animations showing some of his skills. I.e. a striker will have 5-10 highlights of his goals, a mid-fielder will have highlights showing tackles and passes.

Each player will have more meaningful statistics, such as,

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- **Goal Keeping**. (Only applicable to goalkeepers). It shows their ability to save shots.
- **Passing**. A high level of this will mean his/her passes are more successful.
- **Shooting**. Players with this ability are more likely to score.
- **Tackling**. Highly skilled tacklers will win the ball more often in 50-50 chances.
- **Health**. Healthy players will retain sprinting and dribbling abilities for longer periods, players with low health will become less successful in these areas later on in the game.

These will then weight the balance of random decisions. I.e. a player with a high tackling skill will be more able to win the ball in challenges than one without. The skill levels of a player will be reflected in his value.

The user will have other management duties such as the maintenance of the stadium and facilities, training and the trading of players.

Marketing Ideas

There are many options available with a computer product such as this.

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An example of this is to have statistical information present in the LEGO System football mini-figure packs and the computer game. When the user buys a player or team of mini-figure models, their abilities can be put on a statistical sheet in the pack. The purchaser can see how good at passing, shooting and running each of their models are and translate that into the computer game. Each pack can have a 'Skill-code', which the user can enter into the player editor in the computer game. The game can then also contain not only the default and user-designed teams, but also actual teams that they can buy from toy retailers.

Having this 'Skill-code' means users can't just enter random codes at will to create players and teams. They have to buy a model team/player and get the information from a skill-card. Maybe the packs can also be priced according to skill levels of the teams contained within?

Players playing the football game against other players on the Internet can form leagues on the LEGO web site whose results can be published monthly in the LEGO comic.

In the team strip editor we could allow the user to print out his/her designed strip onto blank sticker sheets. Blank LEGO System mini-figures can be sold and the user can then make their custom team to play with on the board game.

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